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for in the long run the practical utility of the survey depends upon the progress of the social sciences whose concepts and categories it seeks to apply.

We do not know, as yet, except in the most superficial way, what ails the rural community. Until more is known mere general description of rural life will not add much to our knowledge or insight.

The present survey is interesting chiefly as a venture into a comparatively new field of observation and study.

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Old Age Pensions: Their Actual Working and Ascertained Results in the United Kingdom. By H. J. HOARE, with an Introduction by SIR LAURENCE GOMME. London: P. S. King, 1915. Pp. xi+196.

The subtitle of this excellent little book indicates its scope and the author's method of treatment. Information that has hitherto been inaccessible to students of the problems involved in state provision for old age is for the first time made available. The author is a lawyer who served before the outbreak of the war (at present he is serving with the British army) as clerk of one of the local pension subcommittees for London. He has not, however, written a technical legal treatise, nor one too cumbered with administrative details. It is rather a practical account of the actual working of the Old Age Pension acts of 1908 and 1911, with a discussion of the gradual development of improved methods of administration. The history of the old-age pension movement has been written by others, and Mr. Hoare makes only the briefest reference to this subject. He deals rather with the way in which the conditions as to age, nationality, residence, and income which are laid down in the statute as requirements to be met by all pensioners have worked out and with the question as to how far these conditions may be considered satisfactory. There are, for example, even in England, where an effective system of birth registration has long been in force, many claimants who fail to secure a pension because they are unable to furnish proof of age. This is a hardship that apparently cannot be removed, and such persons will probably be permanently debarred from participation in the benefits of the scheme. The chapter on the various problems arising in connection with the attempt to determine the income of pensioners is an exceedingly interesting one, and it is a point of importance that although

the statute provided for a sliding scale by which the pension varies from one to five shillings per week, according to the yearly income of the applicant, in practice this scale has been little used, and 94 per cent of the pensions granted are at the full rate. A flat rate would apparently have been better, since the additional administrative work caused by the existence of a sliding scale seems to have brought slight compensations.

The disqualifications relating to poor relief, the procedure on claims, the machinery of the acts, and statistics relating to their administration are also dealt with, and the final chapter contains suggestions for improvements that can only be brought about by statutory amendments.

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